

*The President.* Yes, I like a guy who follows in his father's footsteps. [*Laughter*]

Senator Kyl, who's the chairman of the Republican policy committee—thank you, sir. Deborah Pryce, who you know, and Rick Santorum—thank you both for organizing this event. Thank the members of my Cabinet who are here, John Snow and Josh Bolten. I'm looking forward to working with you.

As you know, David Hobbs has handled legislative affairs for my administration for a couple of years. He's worked very closely with the leadership and the Members of both the House and the Senate. He has decided to move on. He will be replaced by Candi Wolff. I know you look forward to working with Candi. She is a fine soul. And we're going to miss David Hobbs, and I appreciate him for his—I appreciate his long service.

A couple points I'd like to make. First, I think we've proven to the country we know how to set an agenda and work together to achieve it. In other words, people ought to view this team we've put together, the relationship between the executive branch and the legislative branch, as people who are—come to Washington, DC, to solve problems. And we have done so over the last 4 years, and we will continue to do so for the next 4 years.

I look forward to addressing the Nation. I will remind the country we're still at war. And I want to thank the Congress for providing the necessary support for our troops who are in harm's way. I will also tell the people once again that I strongly believe that the way to defeat hatred and terrorism is to spread freedom. And I believe everybody in the world deserves to be free.

I look forward to discussing ways to keep this recovery going so people can find work. I look forward to talking to the country about the need to address big reforms like Social Security. I will continue to articulate the faith-based agenda, the compassion agenda so that people can find hope in our country. I'll remind the people we're a great nation. We can achieve anything we set our mind to. And I will tell them like I'm telling you, it's such an honor to be the President of the United States.

Thank you for letting me come. I look forward to answering your questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at the Greenbrier. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri, son of Representative Roy Blunt. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's Radio Address *January 29, 2005*

Good morning. Tomorrow the world will witness a turning point in the history of Iraq, a milestone in the advance of freedom, and a crucial advance in the war on terror. The Iraqi people will make their way to polling centers across their nation. On the national ballot alone, voters will choose from nearly 19,000 candidates competing for seats in the Transitional National Assembly, in the country's 18 provincial

councils, and in the Kurdistan National Assembly. This historic event will be overseen by the Independent Election Commission of Iraq and will mark the first genuine, nationwide elections in generations.

The terrorists and those who benefited from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein know that free elections will expose the emptiness of their vision for Iraq. That is why

they will stop at nothing to prevent or disrupt this election. The terrorist Zarqawi, who plans and orders many of the car bombings and beheadings in Iraq, recently acknowledged the threat that democracy poses to his cult of hatred. "Of democracy in Iraq," he said, "we have declared a fierce war against this evil principle." He denounced as infidels all who seek to exercise their right to vote as free human beings.

Yet in the face of this intimidation, the Iraqi people are standing firm. Tomorrow's elections will happen because of their courage and determination. All throughout Iraq, these friends of freedom understand the stakes. In the face of assassination, brutal violence, and calculated intimidation, Iraqis continue to prepare for the elections and to campaign for their candidates. They know what democracy will mean for their country, a future of peace, stability, prosperity, and justice for themselves and for their children. One resident of Baghdad said, "This election represents what is possible. To me, it's the start of a new life."

This election is also important for America. Our Nation has always been more secure when freedom is on the march. As hope and freedom spread, the appeal of terror and hate will fade. And there is not a democratic nation in our world that threatens the security of the United States. The best way to ensure the success of democracy is through the advance of democracy.

Tomorrow's vote will be the latest step in Iraq's journey to permanent democracy and freedom. Those elected to the Transitional National Assembly will help appoint a new Government that will fully and fairly represent the diversity of the Iraqi people. This Assembly will also be charged with drafting a permanent constitution that will be put to a vote of the Iraqi people this

fall. If approved, a new nationwide election will follow in December that will choose a new Government under this constitution.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, America's mission there will continue. Our military forces, diplomats, and civilian personnel will help the newly elected Government of Iraq establish security and train Iraqi military police and other forces. Terrorist violence will not end with the election. Yet the terrorists will fail, because the Iraqi people reject their ideology of murder.

Over the past year, the world has seen successful elections in Afghanistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Palestinian Territories. In countries across the broader Middle East, from Morocco to Bahrain, governments are enacting new reforms and increasing participation for their people.

Tomorrow's election will add to the momentum of democracy. One Iraqi, speaking about the upcoming vote, said, "Now, most people feel they are living in darkness. It is time for us to come into the light." Every Iraqi who casts his or her vote deserves the admiration of the world. And free people everywhere send their best wishes to the Iraqi people as they move further into the light of liberty.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Address to the Nation on the Iraqi Elections *January 30, 2005*

Today the people of Iraq have spoken to the world, and the world is hearing the voice of freedom from the center of the Middle East.

In great numbers and under great risk, Iraqis have shown their commitment to democracy. By participating in free elections, the Iraqi people have firmly rejected the anti-democratic ideology of the terrorists. They have refused to be intimidated by thugs and assassins. And they have demonstrated the kind of courage that is always the foundation of self-government.

Some Iraqis were killed while exercising their rights as citizens. We also mourn the American and British military personnel who lost their lives today. Their sacrifices were made in a vital cause of freedom, peace in a troubled region, and a more secure future for us all.

The Iraqi people, themselves, made this election a resounding success. Brave patriots stepped forward as candidates. Many citizens volunteered as pollworkers. More than 100,000 Iraqi security force personnel guarded polling places and conducted operations against terrorist groups. One news account told of a voter who had lost a leg in a terror attack last year and went to the polls today despite threats of violence. He said, "I would have crawled here if I had to. I don't want terrorists to kill other Iraqis like they tried to kill me. Today I am voting for peace."

Across Iraq today, men and women have taken rightful control of their country's des-

tiny, and they have chosen a future of freedom and peace. In this process, Iraqis have had many friends at their side. The European Union and the United Nations gave important assistance in the election process. The American military and our diplomats, working with our coalition partners, have been skilled and relentless, and their sacrifices have helped to bring Iraqis to this day. The people of the United States have been patient and resolute, even in difficult days.

The commitment to a free Iraq now goes forward. This historic election begins the process of drafting and ratifying a new constitution, which will be the basis of a fully democratic Iraqi Government. Terrorists and insurgents will continue to wage their war against democracy, and we will support the Iraqi people in their fight against them. We will continue training Iraqi security forces so this rising democracy can eventually take responsibility for its own security.

There's more distance to travel on the road to democracy. Yet Iraqis are proving they're equal to the challenge. On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the people of Iraq on this great and historic achievement.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. from the Cross Hall at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.